



THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

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ANNUAL MEETING: ANOTHER PICNIC

We enjoyed it so much last year we think we'll do it again and hope you will join us on Thursday evening, June 20, in Berkeley's Tilden Park at the Meadows Picnic Area. The chapter will supply nonalcoholic beverages and salad; we ask you to bring a dessert to share, and your own main dish. To eliminate plastic, paper and styrofoam, please bring your own utensils, plates and cups. We will have charcoal grills hot and available, soapy water for washing your utensils, etc. The time is 5 p.m. until after sunset. Please call the office, 843-2222, to let us know that you will be coming.

Directions to the Meadows Picnic Area: enter Tilden Park at Wildcat Canyon, Grizzly Peak and Spruce entrance, turn into Canyon Drive at that intersection (left from Spruce, right from Grizzly Peak). At the foot of Canyon Drive make a right turn past the pony ride and continue to a meadow on your left. Our signs will guide you.

Come celebrate the solstice and GGAS!

BIRDATHON TEAMS RUN WILD

On April 20, or thereabouts, some Golden Gate and Marin Audubon members and friends had a field day, commonly known as Bay Birdathon 1991. The 25 or so teams were as varied in name as the miles driven and areas visited looking for bird species. All of the teams have not yet described experiences and reported totals, but LOONATICKS, the team of Alan Hopkins, Dan Singer, David Wimpfheimer, Donna Lion, David Holway found an amazing number of species—191.

(continued on next page)

YOUR 1991-2 BALLOT IS IN THIS ISSUE

Because the term of office of the chapter president is two years, Bruce Walker continues to serve until June 1992. Officers have all agreed to serve again, and have been re-nominated. Donna Lion, who filled the vacancy created by Tom White's resignation, has agreed to serve for a full term, and Leora Feeney has agreed to serve another term.

There is a need for people to serve on several chapter committees, in particular the East and West sections of the Conservation Committee. Call the GGAS office (843-2222) or Conservation Chairman Arthur Feinstein (282-5937) for information about the next meeting, or about other needs for help in the chapter.

BIRDATHON*(continued)*

The NOT-SO-OLDSQUAWS found 178 species, some by flashlight.

The ENVIRONMENTALISTS, Alan Hopkins again, Jan Anderson and Mark Elliott, spent their day WALKING and found 126 species in about 17 miles from Panoramic Hwy. to Agate Beach in Marin. They offer a challenge to future Birdathoners to get out of their cars and do it in the environmental way.

Many thanks to all of you who pledged to your team, and for Mono Lake. The teams seemed to enjoy the challenge and the spirit of competition. We will have more details in a later publication.

MARY LEE JEFFERDS RETIRES

April 1, after 18 years service on the East Bay Regional Park Board of Directors, Mary Lee Jeffords retired. She represented Ward One, Berkeley, Albany, Piedmont, Kensington, El Cerrito, and parts of Oakland and Richmond. Her distinguished service on the board was acknowledged by Staff and fellow board members, who noted her contributions to the park, to statewide park associations, to the environmental movement, to local and regional government. A member of GGAS, long time manager of the national Audubon Society Resource Center in Berkeley, and Audubon's Bay Area Educational Services, she has been a leader in protecting the environment in the parklands and in advocating environmental education programs in the park.

GGAS recognized her service with the Conservation Award in 1985, and notes now that she will be much missed

on the park board. Our very best wishes go to her.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Friday-Sunday, May 31-June 2—
Birding by Ear in Yosemite.

Saturday-Sunday, June 8-9—Yuba Pass and vicinity.

Wednesday, June 12—Mini-trip to Redwood Regional Park.

For details on the above trips see *The GULL* for May.

Saturday-Sunday, June 15-16—
Mono Basin. Meet at 8 a.m. at Mono County Park 5 miles north of Lee Vining and just east off Hwy. 395. To get to Mono Basin take Hwy. 120 over Tioga Pass to the town of Lee Vining and proceed north to the meeting place. (An alternate route is around Lake Tahoe to Hwy. 395 and then south to Mono County Park.)

We will spend Saturday birding the north side of the lake looking for common residents in various habitats. This is the day of the Annual Breeding Bird Census at Mono Lake, and we will be helping by recording any nesting behavior we see. After a good day of birding we will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Mono County Park for a potluck (weather permitting).

On Sunday we will meet at 8 a.m. at the turnoff from Hwy. 120 to South Tufa State Preserve. Take Hwy. 395 south from Lee Vining to Hwy. 120 east. Turn left and proceed to South Tufa State Preserve turnoff. We will bird this area and the Jeffrey Pine forest south and east of here looking for Gray Flycatchers, Gnatcatchers and other Mono Basin specialties.

Be prepared for hot bright sun and/or cold wind and rain. The elevation of the basin is 6400 ft. and the temperature may drop at night. Bring lunches for both days (plus a potluck) and be prepared for some leisurely hiking.

Forest Service campgrounds are available southwest of Lee Vining in Lee Vining Canyon, and north of town up Lundy Canyon. Motels in Lee Vining include: Best Western Lakeview Motel (619/647-6543), Gateway Motel (619/647-6467), and Murphey's Motel (619/647-6316). Leaders: Helen and Paul Green (526-5943). (✓)

Friday-Sunday, June 21-23—
Lassen Volcanic National Park. Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Willow, Hammond's, and Dusky Flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains.

The more serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and Sunday. We will bird around the lake for 2-3 hours, return to camp for a quick breakfast and meet at the store for another outing at 10:30. On Friday we will take a leisurely hike of about 3 miles on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. (We may climb as much as 700 ft.) Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids, Suntan lotion, a hat, mosquito repellent and warm clothing may also be necessary.

Saturday is a special day for everyone. We will meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all day excursion of about 100 miles will include a 2 or 3-hour swim at Lake Britton. If you forget your

swimsuit, the trails at Burney Park offer a wonderful diversion, and fishermen can try their luck in some of northern California's finest trout streams. Since this is a long and tiring day we suggest a get-together for dinner at a nearby restaurant instead of returning to the campstove.

Stop by our campsite for further information. We will have a campfire every evening beginning at 8 p.m. Bring your own chair (and cup of wine if you choose). We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or the office at Doan's for our poster and campsite number and any last minute changes in the schedule.

Sunday we will meet at 10:30 a.m. to drive through the park—making frequent stops for birding. We should reach the south entrance around 1 p.m., depending upon how long we play in the snow at the summit. For this final event, bring warm gloves (and a plastic trash bag for a mini-toboggan.)

From the Bay Area drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy. 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging is available about 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (916) 335-7121). Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (564-0074). \$ (✓)

Sunday, July 7—Chimney Rock, Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters (one mile northwest of Olema). We will caravan to the coast. Join in our annual trip to look for nesting Black Oystercatchers, Western Gulls, and other birds of the Drake's Bay region. Bring lunch, liquids, and a scope if you have one. Leader: Darell Hall (526-3059). (✓)

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

Plan Ahead:

Aug. 8-11—Backpacking to Snag Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. (See July-Aug. *GULL* for details.)

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

NEST RECORDS NEEDED

For a study of cowbird parasitism on Bay Area passersines, minimum data needed are: species, number of host eggs or nestlings, number of cowbird eggs or nestlings, location, and date. Nests with and without cowbird parasitism are equally important. Information on the fate of the nest is very desirable, if available. Please send records (or requests for further information to Pepper Trail, Dept. of Ornithology and Mammalogy, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118; (750-7176.)

Actionline



Call 24 hours
a day for a
recorded
update on
fast-moving
environmental
legislation.

(202) 547-9017

APRIL OBSERVATIONS

In a miracle of timing, the latest Superior Court judgement regarding Mono Lake was handed down two days before our Birdathon. There was jubilation everywhere but Los Angeles as Judge Terrence Finney, who should be lauded to the heavens, refused to allow the L.A. Dept. of Water and Power to resume feeder stream diversions until the Mono Lake level has risen two feet to 6377. The downside is that this may take several years because of the drought, meaning the land bridge to Negit Island will remain. Judge Finney, drawing heavily on the doctrine of "public trust," called Mono Lake a national environmental treasure and emphasized that too little is understood about the breeding biology of California Gulls to determine whether they have recovered from previous nesting disasters resulting from predation due to low water.

This ruling essentially reaffirms previous rulings and hopefully will remain in effect, without appeal, until the State Water Resources Control Board is able to make the final determination on lake level, which requires more testimony and legal wrangling, and is probably not imminent. Interestingly, the State Water Resources Control Board's decision must be accepted or over-ruled by Judge Finney.

In the meantime, there is carping in LA that perhaps the public's money is being spent unwisely on a series of losing court cases and perhaps the time has come to explore alternate sources of water and a nonlegal solution to the problem. The only word for that is "amen."

* * * * *

Well, it's spring and the birds are migrating thru in waves, both by land and by sea. A sea-watch most mornings this time of year will produce long

strings of Pacific Loons, scoters and Brant migrating north, while fishing in selected bushes can call forth a surprising array of warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Spring seas, for those brave (or foolish) enough to venture forth, are producing the by-now familiar reports of **Murphy's Petrel** (122) and **Cook's Petrel** (15), both reported from a research vessel off Pt. Sur from the 7th to the 12th (DR). It appears that the birds are quite regular each spring; it's just the watchers who are irregular. Also reported on the same trip were three Fork-tailed and a few Leach's Storm-Petrels. An observer at Pigeon Pt. on April 11 had **34,000** Sooty Shearwaters (BS fide RSTh), testimony to the scope of bird movements that are going on out there. Other birds of pelagic interest included two Pink-footed Shearwaters off Pigeon Pt. on the 13th (BS fide RSTh), and five Black-footed Albatross and single Ancient Murrelets off Pigeon Pt. on the 11th (BS fide RSTh) and Pt. Santa Cruz on the 22nd (SMld).

An American Bittern near the marina at Mono Lake on the 28th was only the 3rd record for the Mono Basin (HG, PG fide ES). A Sora was most unusual at Rush Creek on the 19th and can probably be attributed to the fact that there is finally water flowing in the creek for the first time in a while, thanks to our good Judge Finney (IM fide ES).

DUCKS AND GEESE—A white-bellied Brant, the eastern subspecies, on Tomales Bay on the 16th was the third such sighting this winter (RS).

An adult male Garganey was reported from Watsonville on the 2nd (KKI, CKf). Eurasian Wigeon continued to be seen at Bolinas Lagoon (KH) and Crittenton Marsh in Santa Clara (PJM). A few Tufted Ducks remained: a male at Lake Merritt (BPa, SBe, KFr); another male at Doolittle Pond on the 4th (TSI); and a female at Lake Merced (ASH,

JMHu). A single Oldsquaw was at Doolittle Pond on the 7th and 8th (TCK, AWi).

SHOREBIRDS AND GULLS—

Seven Lesser Golden-Plovers, now mostly in quite spectacular breeding plumage, continued to be seen at the Spaletta Plateau (mob). Another three, migrating, flew by Pigeon Pt. on the 11th (BS fide RSTh). The shorebird of the month seems to be Solitary Sandpiper, remarkably like a Lesser Yellowlegs in breeding plumage, which turned up in a number of places in the Bay Area late in the month: two at Lake Merced (DPM, DSg, ASH); two in Sonoma County (BBu fide NTC, NTC); one at Mission College in Santa Clara (DDeS); and one at Coyote Creek (PJM, SBT). Also at the Coyote Creek Riparian Station on May 1 was a Semipalmated Sandpiper (SBT), quite an unusual spring migrant in this area, although picking out young individuals from amongst the Westerns and Leasts later in the summer is a popular identification exercise. Baird's Sandpipers, like Semipalmated, are more usual during fall migration than spring, so three individuals, found on the shorebird count at Mono on the 26th, were only the 4th spring record and worthy of note (HG, PG fide ES); likewise two additional individuals at the mouth of Walker Creek on Tomales Bay on the 26th (RS). Four hundred and thirty Semipalmated Plovers at Coyote Slough on the April 27th shorebird count astounded counters who were used to considerably lower numbers and who were finding lower-than-expected numbers of everything else (RS). A Stilt Sandpiper in southern Solano County on May 1 was an excellent as well as gorgeous spring sighting; also present were four Lesser Golden-Plovers (RS, JE). Franklins Gulls were reported from Milpitas (PJM, mob), Stockton (DGY) and Pigeon Pt. where there was

also an adult Little Gull (BS fide RSTh). Least Terns returned to Alameda on the 25th (TB, MIF, JMHu); a single Black Tern put in an appearance at Bolinas Lagoon on the 29th (KH).

LANDBIRDS—It's hummingbird time again: Black-chinned in Alamo (JMR) and Del Puerto Canyon (FGB, JMR), as well as the Coyote Creek Banding Station where the suspicion is that they breed (PJM, SBT). The feeder-frequenting Costa's Hummingbird at Pt. Reyes Station remained through the month (RS); another was seen in Alamo on the 10th (JMR); and the usual sightings on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. began on the 23rd (mob). Veritable hoards of Calliope Hummingbirds (up to 25) were seen on Corral Hollow Rd., feeding on the flowering Black Sage (MLR, DGY); additional birds were reported from Alamo (JMR), Berkeley (AdW), Mt. Diablo (RJR), and Lafayette Reservoir (AR). This may be a difficult year for some of these hummingbirds—many of the Anna's appear to have died during the winter cold-snap and now much of the flowering vegetation which attracts the birds appears to be dead. Lower Del Puerto Canyon Rd. is a wasteland when it comes to flowering tobacco—on April 20 the bushes were brown and there wasn't a blossom in sight. Of some interest is the sighting of two Pileated Woodpeckers at Redwood Regional Park (RJR)—this is not a bird that is expected in the East Bay, although there have been infrequent but regular reports of individuals or pairs over the last couple of years, and what we have may be a range extension for this species. Any sightings in this area should be reported.

There was a major migration of *Empidonax* flycatchers through the Mt. Diablo area mid- to late month. Hammond's, Dusky and Gray were all reported in higher than normal

numbers. The pair of Cassin's Kingbirds returned to the golf course at the junction of Hwy. 580 and 132 on the 13th (DGY, mob) where the birds were spotted carrying nesting material.

Most of the warblers we get this time of year are the normally expected migrants returning to nest or passing through headed for points north and east, but being expected does not make the less common individuals any less interesting. Nashville Warblers were reported from the Pinnacles on the 12th and 13th (JSC); Briones on the 21st (PCI); and Mines Road on the 20th and 23rd (HG, FGB). A Black-and-White Warbler was at the Pt. Reyes Youth Hostel on the 13th (SyB); and MacGillivray's Warblers were seen on Mines Rd. on the 23rd (FGB) and Del Puerto Canyon Rd. on the 29th along with a Yellow-breasted Chat (GFi). There was another Chat at Pomponio Creek in San Mateo Cty. on the 21st (RSTh), and yet another at Sunol on the 29th and 30th (AIH).

The Summer Tanager remained at the Oakland feeder thru the 6th (ND, MiF, HG); the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at the Woodside feeder thru the 5th (BB, AdW). Clay-colored Sparrows continued to be seen at Pine Gulch Creek (KH, RS, mob) and Half Moon Bay (GDeg). A single Swamp Sparrow was spotted at the Cassin's Kingbird golf course on the 20th (RJR). A Harris' Sparrow, apparently present in prior years, continued to come to a feeder in Bolinas (KH). And a breeding plumage female Lapland Longspur in Redwood City was an unusual spring-time sight (RSTh, MiF, JSC). A male Yellow-headed Blackbird, an interior species not expected near the coast, has been in the vicinity of the Coyote Creek Riparian Station since the 17th (PJM, SBT); another (or perhaps the same) individual was at Warm Springs in Fremont on May 2nd (LRF).

Yet another male was sighted at Bodega Bay on the 20th (NTC. BBu). On the 20th, an adult male Scott's Oriole flew across the road at San Antonio Junction as a car-load of birdathoners passed by (HK)—a bird of the southwestern desert, there are but a handful of records for northern California. Small numbers of Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks have been around.

OBSERVERS—S. Benevidez, Florence G. Bennett, Barbara Bessey (BB), Tina Breschini, Betty Burridge (BBu), Peter Clyne, Tom Cockle, Nancy T. Conzett, J. Scott Cox, David DeSante, Nancy Dutcher, Jules Evens, Leora R. Feeney, Mike Feighner, George Finger, Kathy Francone, Helen Green, Paul Green, Keith Hansen, Alan S. Hopkins, Joan M. Humphrey, Harrison Karr, Ken Kellman, Clay Kempf, Ilene Mandelbaum, Peter J. Metropulos, Scott Molodnow, Dan P. Murphy, B. Pann, Anita Rama, Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe, Dan Singer, Tim Slattery, Rich Stallcup, Emilie Strauss, Scott B. Terrill, Ron S. Thorn, Adrian Wander, Anna Wilcox, David G. Yee.

—ANN DEWART



CONSERVATION NOTES

Business Park, An Oxymoron

The vision of our local bays rimmed with parks and natural wetlands, alive with all the creatures of marsh and parkland, is relatively new. Not too long ago, the edges of our waterways were convenient dump sites, areas for heavy industry, or worse yet, outlets for sewage. Unfortunately, the remaining areas still available for parks are often viewed by city councils and their planning commissions as suitable for commercial development.

There is now an opportunity for the public to consider the extension of the boundaries of Point Pinole Regional Shoreline Park to include the area northwest of the Amtrack railroad line which is partially bounded by San Pablo Bay. This land is part of the proposed Point Pinole Business Park and residential area currently under consideration by the City of Richmond. A chain of complex economic factors and the fact that the long awaited Richmond Parkway is now becoming a reality have led to commercial interest in the land. The Parkway will connect the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to I-80 by following a route roughly along Garrard Boulevard to Giant Road and it will enter I-80 near the Hilltop Shopping Mall.

The Business Park plan shows considerable office building development with a great deal of parking (some 2600 parking spaces) on portions of the site adjacent to the Regional Shoreline Park. In addition, there is no indication in the plan of what kind of industry would be acceptable in the remainder of the area.

Environmental concerns are many. The project site drains into the wetlands of the Shoreline Park. These wetlands support plants and animals, some of which are protected under State and Federal Endangered Species Acts and the California Native Plant Protection

Act. This includes the salt marsh harvest mouse, the California clapper rail, the black rail and a fuzzy little plant with the remarkable name of "soft bird's beak." The salt marshes reflect the character of the former San Francisco Bay shoreline (prior to extensive bay fill) and are essential to the lives and continuing population of waterfowl. Spills of industrial materials, both liquid and solid, could enter the storm drainage system. Grading during construction could cause erosion of the site and consequent siltation of wetlands. Large expanses of concrete or other paving could increase the speed of runoff from winter storms, resulting in erosion of wetlands. The blue gum eucalyptus forests on the present parkland extend into the business park project. Explosives were manufactured for many years at Point Pinole, and the trees were planted as shields for bunker storage facilities. As such, the Park District considers them an historic reserve. The trees are subject to extremely hot and fast moving wildfires, and back fires have been used as a control measure which might not be possible near a developed area.

The migratory monarch butterfly may be dependent on the forests. Some studies indicate that, from the standpoint of the butterfly, the most important woodland lies on the project site.

Noise, visual impact, air quality, and public safety are other serious concerns generated by the project.

The East Bay Regional Park District's Master Plan 1989 includes a shoreline trail from Point Pinole to Hercules, a part of the planned trail to continue on to the Carquinez Bridge. With the recent acquisition of Lone Tree Point in Rodeo and Wilson Point near Pinole this trail comes closer to reality. Development of park areas along the west Contra Costa County shoreline has historically been neglected because of

isolation and heavy concentration of industry.

The key agency in the Point Pinole Business Park is now the Richmond City Council. Currently the EBRPD has asked that an Environmental Impact Report be required for the development. To be on the mailing list for hearing dates on the project, call the City of Richmond Planning Commission. Letters to the Editor of the West County Times, P.O. Box 128, Pinole, CA 94564, and the Oakland Tribune, P.O. Box 24424, Oakland, CA 94623, would be helpful. So would petitions to the Richmond City Council. It is important that we protect these special places of beauty and serenity where land and water meet.

PARKS AND WILDLIFE INITIATIVE GEARS UP

You can make a major difference in preserving wetlands, native forests, wildlife areas an open space in the Bay Area and throughout California. Help by gathering signatures for one of the most important ballot measures in California history.

The California Wildlife, Coastal, Parkland and Forest Conservation Bond Act (CalPAW) will only appear on the June 1992 ballot if you help to collect the needed signatures. CalPAW '92 follows up on the very successful Proposition 70, which conservationists placed on the June 1988 ballot. CalPAW '92 would ensure that parks, open space and wildlife habitat, as well as our ancient redwood and other native forests are protected for future generations.

CalPAW '92 allocates nearly two billion dollars to more than 140 specific forest, wildlife and park projects throughout California. Three hundred and ten million dollars is earmarked for wetlands acquisition and restoration



throughout the State. CalPAW '92 includes many projects which would benefit the Bay Area. Five million dollars is allotted towards an East Shore State Park between the Richmond and Bay bridges. Four million is provided for the acquisition of natural lands on Mt. Tamalpias in Marin County.

CalPAW '92 will protect endangered lands literally from the Oregon border in Del Norte County to the Tijuana River on the Mexican border. In addition, there is funding for specific programs to acquire old growth redwoods, restore fisheries and protect unique riparian and coastal habitats.

Signature gathering will begin in early June and continue through the summer. You can volunteer for this historic effort by calling or writing CalPAW '92.

In the East Bay:

Anton Haramis
2980 Adeline St.
Berkeley, CA 94703
(415) 839-7882

In San Francisco:

Tim Schott
1465 Page St. #2
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 252-7894

MONO LAKE VICTORY

For Mono Lake there is cause for celebration. In April a significant court victory was won. El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Finney issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting Los Angeles Department of Water and Power from diverting any water from Mono Lake until a minimum lake level of 6377 feet has been reached. The order remains in effect until the State Water Resources Board (SWRB) rules on a minimum lake level at the end of 1992. This means good news for the Mono Lake Committee, but it also leads to the next step which is to monitor SWRB and to try for a lasting solution for both Mono Lake and Los Angeles.

MORE ON LESLIE SALT CASE

In the article, "Wetlands Victory in the Leslie Salt Case" which appeared in *The GULL* for April on pages 60-61, Steve Margolin made a concise summary of the complex issues and legal maneuverings in the case. I believe it understates the Corps of Engineers' role in this victory for environmentalists.

As a former Corps employee during the time the litigation was going on (although not directly involved in the actual case), I can attest to the many hours Corps employees spent collecting data to support the jurisdiction, preparing witnesses, and hiring consultants to perform studies. While some may argue that as federal employees this was their job, I know that many employees worked long hours under considerable pressure and heavy workloads to assemble a case that would convince the Department of Justice to countersue, and later appeal. Many of your readers may not realize that when the Corps wants to "go after" a violator, it must

convince the Department of Justice of the case's merit, not often an easy task.

Also, I believe that it is important to acknowledge an agency's efforts when we think it has done the right thing—just as *The GULL* congratulated the EPA (on the same page) for the tough stand against the Port of Oakland dredging violations. One of the main missions of the Corps' regulatory responsibilities is to make decisions that represent the public interest. As constituents it is our responsibility to speak up and give credit when our interest has been well represented.

Finally, it was the Corps' and Department of Justice's decision to appeal the unfavorable decision against the US Government. The National Audubon Society and Save San Francisco Bay joined the case as interveners, meaning the case could not be settled without their agreement.

—JOELLE BUFFA

WHAT THE BOARD DID . . .

Well, not too much really.

Seriously, the April 22 meeting was devoted to deliberating on the chapter budget. In *The GULL* for July-August we'll print the results of that effort following its approval at the May board meeting.

Revenue of the chapter is from rebated NAS dues (42%), Birdathon (16%), interest (14%), seed and other sales (10%), gifts and bequests (8%), and other (10%). Naturally, as the board studied the goals and the funds available it concluded that more effort at membership and fundraising are critical needs. It also concluded that a person to be responsible for our seed sales is a critical need.

BACK YARD BIRDER

"Timing is everything." No truer words were ever spoken in terms of bird watching—or life in general! Luck and timing, enabling the bird voyeur to enjoy watching a bird and its behavior, are the reasons for the popularity of the sport. It's akin to a treasure hunt. What will I see today? Once hooked, it's an impossible habit to break.

In March we were in Tucson, Arizona and I had some spare time to become acquainted with some of the more common birds near our room. Most were nesting so there was a lot going on. The Gila Woodpeckers were noisily excavating holes in Saguaro cacti. Some pairs were already feeding young which had hatched deep within a cavity. Later, an Elf Owl might take up residence, but they hadn't returned from the south yet, much to my disappointment.

A female Mourning Dove had chosen to nest (and I use that term loosely since there was no evidence of a structure) in the fork of a tree next to a rail only 3' off the ground. She made eye contact but was unruffled by our stares. Another dove had a more substantial home of dried grass and twigs on a rafter above our door. She was oblivious to our traffic. I guess that's why there's no shortage of doves!

The Arizona state bird, the Cactus Wren was highly visible and audible. Their loud, enthusiastic songs became familiar ones. This largest of our wrens has a unique greeting habit. The male extends its wings and tail while sort of growling while the female does the same in response before crouching, seemingly in submission. The birds build a pouch-shaped nest in the safety of a prickly cholla, entering the nesting chamber through a narrow passage. Several nests are built and used as

roosts or, later, for their second brood. One pair was expert in the art of recycling. Their nest was dolled up with shreds of computer paper, bits of plastic wrap and tape-recorder ribbon. Very colorful indeed! (But a sad comment on modern life.)

High in a huge eucalyptus tree we enjoyed spying on a nesting Great Horned Owl. She peeped over her nest's rim at the foolish humans who hooted to her. At night we would hear the pillow talk of the pair of owls.

The handsome Harris' Hawk, sporting chestnut shoulders, a white rump and dark tail tipped in white, was most cooperative in posing on tree limbs or power poles. The resident Red-winged Blackbirds delighted in mobbing him.

Even the most myopic person could spot the Northern Cardinal. First we would hear its loud liquid whistle in the thickets streamside. Then he would appear, calmly hopping among bare branches, a brilliant red bird with a cone-shaped orangish-red bill. Another crested bird was atop a tree and close examination proved it was a close relative, the Pyrrhuloxia, a life bird for me. Its greyish body is tinged with red and its bill is strongly curved, resembling a parrot's bill.

I might have missed another life bird if I hadn't looked carefully at what appeared to be a boring Brown Towhee. Towhees have been divided into the California Towhee (ours) and the Canyon Towhee, found in the interior. They look much the same but have quite different calls. The Canyon's is a mellow, chipping trill. Very shy, this fellow was wearing a unique black "mask": Abert's Towhee! It is becoming rare because of loss of habitat and parasitism by cowbirds. Lucky me!

I noticed a Curved-billed Thrasher was always on a low wall near our room

when I chanced upon an occupied nest deep amidst a cholla cactus. When the adult flew, I spotted 3 blue-green eggs in the nest. One bird kept guard while the other brooded. Obviously devoted, the sentry would emit liquid "whit'wheel" warning calls. It would also burst into lovely, elaborate songs. Much to my relief, they, as well as "our" exposed dove, survived a savage and freezing rain and wind storm one night.

I discreetly followed a Roadrunner who had found just the right grassy nesting material the gardeners had discarded. He would scurry a few yards, cast a suspicious eye at me, then zip along again. Finally I lost him in the underbrush. Or maybe *he* was a *she*?

An early returnee from Mexico made my day: a male Costa's Hummingbird. In his eagerness to fill up on Penstemon nectar, he dallied in the sun to show me every side of his beautiful plumage. His purple crown iridesced in the light and he flared his purple gorget for a spectacular effect before flashing away. Was it my imagination or did I really see him?

Timing and luck gave me the chance to better know some of the birds of the Arizona desert. Can't wait to return for the unknown!

—MEG PAULETICH

LETTER

That not-before-seen (by me) bird arrived in our front yard sometime in early February, attracted by the suet feeder I had kept filled since December (recipe for enticing suet mixture to follow). It took me some time to convince myself that, yes, it could be a Summer Tanager! (thanks to other sightings reported in *The GULL*). As I lead bird walks in the Pinecrest area in the summer, I'm always delighted to

share, and after David Rice confirmed my sighting, and the bird had been visiting my feeder several times daily, and indeed chased smaller birds away, I decided to call the Rare Bird Alert. Little did I know of the "enthusiasm" I'd find in other Audubon members. On Easter, my husband came home to lunch and found fifteen binoculars aimed at the feeder. The folks sporting the binoculars were hiding in all corners of, and under ferns and rhododendrons in our yard. Of course, the Tanager decided not to perform, and only appeared when most of the people left, and a few determined souls stayed on. Over the next few days, people arrived at all times of the day, which really delighted me. My husband asked if my camera with the telephoto lens was to snap the bird or the birdwatchers! While some did see the bird, I'm afraid our yard is too small to successfully camouflage the numbers of people that came.

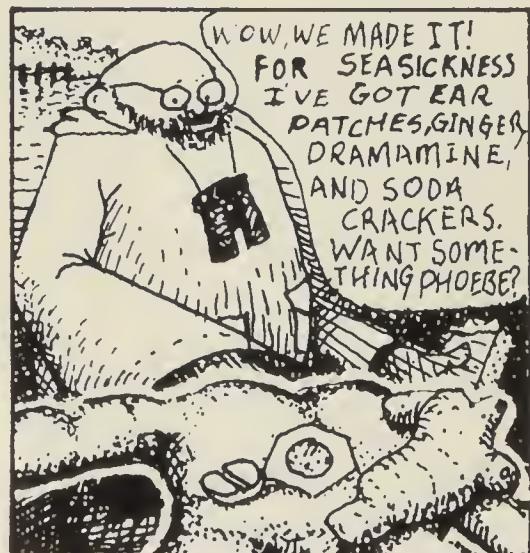
The Summer Tanager has been with us for at least two months, and I hope it will return next year. It has been a joy to watch this young male, dull gold when he arrived, daily take on a little more color as he turns the red of his first adult summer plumage.



In the meantime, the suet mixture has also been well visited by a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chickadee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Titmouse and Song Sparrow. As well, Steller's Jay and squirrels try all sorts of acrobatics to get at the suet. My "recipe" for suet cakes: Remove any meat on the suet (any fat will do—ask your meat market—they give it away), cut into chunks, and grind up (in a food processor if you have one). melt over a low-medium heat. For 4 C. melted fat, add about 1/2 C. peanut butter, 1/3 C. honey, about 1 1/2 C. mixed birdseed, 1 C. sunflower seeds, and a couple of handfuls of raisins or currants. Let partially cool then stir to distribute the seeds etc. Pour into saran-lined containers (small pie tins, cottage cheese containers, etc.). Refrigerate. When firm, put in a wire suet feeder. (I bought mine at the GGAS seed sale—it's great.)

For all that came to see "our" Tanager, it was our pleasure to have you visit, and everyone that came was considerate of our home and yard. (I'm just sorry that some of you were disappointed when he didn't appear.) Bird watchers are sure nice folks!

—NANCY DUTCHER



SLIDE DUPLICATING WORKSHOP

Evelyn Miller's workshop, given for the Bird Photographers, will be repeated under the auspices of the California Academy of Sciences. Tuesday, July 23, 8-10 p.m. will be the slide lecture on all aspects of duplication, equipment and materials, color balance and correction, exposure correction, cropping and special effects. On Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. there will be a hands-on practice session. Phone (415) 750-7100.

NAS BOOTCAMP: POPULATION

National Audubon Society's Washington Bootcamps for activists have been found very helpful in teaching the skills needed to work effectively with Congress and State Legislatures. September 14 to 21 is the third of a series focused on population problems: political action to save the planet. A \$250 fee covers transportation to and from bootcamp, hotel accommodations during the Washington stay, continental breakfasts during the week and

some lunches. Other meals at participant's expense. For information call Tanya Fay, program coordinator at (202) 547-9009. Lodging: 1-800 783-3350; Transportation: 1-800 775-5830.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies
Gary Holloway, President

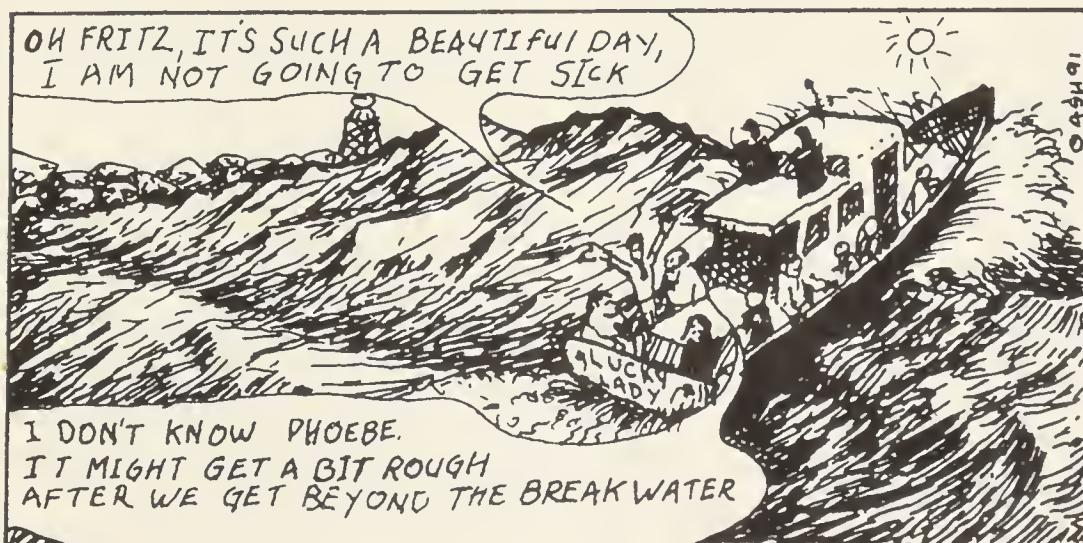
SEASON'S END

ACR's public season is coming to an end. Have you visited the Ranch recently? It's just about your last chance. The herons and egrets were very late this year, so you should still be able to find eggs in a few of the nests and downy young in most of them. Remember, the Ranch closes July 14.

WHAT IS EVERYTHING?

Well, Jeopardy fans, that's what's up at Bouverie.

Ross Petersen tops our list. Carol and John Petersen (our resident biologist) are the very proud parents of Ross. John tells me he will be out on the trail



long before you read this. Congratulations to Carol and John, and welcome to Ross, one of the very few of us who can see the Bouverie Preserve without reservations.

After our March rains the Sonoma hills exploded with wildflowers. John Petersen told me it was one of the best years ever. Nesting Turkey Vultures near the waterfall top the list of breeding birds this year. Orange-crowned Warblers and Warbling Vireos are everywhere. Even Black-throated Gray Warblers seem numerous this year. The population of red-bellied, rough-skinned and California newts is booming according to our volunteer census takers.

People too are part of the "everything" at the Bouverie Preserve. During the past year our wonderful docents led 88 classes of school children through the natural wonders of the preserve. Sadly they had to turn away an additional 58 applicants. Even in limiting applications to 3rd and 4th grade classes, and increasing the number of class visits, the fall program is completely booked.

The guided nature walks were a huge success, too. Led by those same devoted docents, many of us were able to enjoy the beauty and wonder of Bouverie. They will start up again in September. Watch this space for details on those trips.

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!

Be a part of the Bouverie Audubon Preserve docent family. Yes, training will begin for another docent class in September. Interviews will be held in June and August. Call (707) 938-4554 if you want to be a part of our marvelous family. We have openings for 25 new docents.

—DAN MURPHY



NEW ZEALAND A Mono Lake Committee Adventure Tour

New Zealand is the eighth destination in the series of adventure travels to benefit Mono Lake. Feb. 7-28, 1992, it will be more than a touch-base kind of trip. Expert guides will inform us about natural and cultural history of the areas we visit. Travel will be by plane, train, bus, boat and foot. The latter includes a 3-day hike on the Routeburn Track (there is an alternative plan for anyone not wishing to hike.) The itinerary will include Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown. Outdoor experiences will include a farm-stay, Rotorua geothermal area, Muriwai Beach, Tongariro National Park, and much more. Plant and animal life in these regions is very diverse and land and seascapes are spectacular. Arranged by Betchart Expeditions, the cost is \$3,590 which includes a tax-deductible donation to help save Mono Lake. Airfare between the U.S. and New Zealand is additional. For a brochure with complete details write or call me at 2719 Marin Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708, phone 526-1260.

—MILDRED BENNETT

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

In memory of

Angus MacIntyre

Gift of

Estate of Robert D. Palmer

In honor of

Bruce Walker &

Mary Law

Ed Vine

Sylvia McLaughlin

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

— BALLOT —

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1st Vice-president
Steve Margolin

2nd Vice-president
Lina Jane Prairie

Recording Secretary
Leslie Lethridge

Corresponding Secretary
Ruth Dement

Treasurer
Nicola Selph

Directors (term three years):

West Bay
Donna Lion

East Bay
Leora Feeney

This ballot must be returned to the GGAS office not later than June 15 to be counted. You may vote for any or all of the candidates by placing an x in the box following the candidate's name.



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THE GULL

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Dan Murphy
Bruce Howard

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) (415) 528-0288
Update: 524-5592

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

The Gull deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.